By Joe Crews

Introduction

After his disastrous defeat at Waterloo, Napoleon, so the story goes, met with some of his leading generals to analyze the battle's flawed strategies. In the course of their discussions, the little general pointed at England on the colored map before them and said bitterly, "Except for that red spot I would be master of the world." Satan could say the same thing today except he would point to a cross on a hill outside the walls of Old Jerusalem. Aren't you thankful for that red spot of Calvary that rescued this world from the control of our great enemy?

That was the place, the time, and the con- test that settled the destiny of planet earth. Satan has been a defeated foe ever since. There it was that he met his Waterloo and suffered a decisive defeat from which he will never fully recover.

How few of us understand the real meaning of Christ's suffering and death on that cross. We have only a dim comprehension of the conflict He passed through and the kind of agonizing death He experienced. Could our eyes be opened to grasp the true significance of His sacrifice, there would be no more miserable collaborating with Satan. Our weakness would be turned into courage and victory.

The Bible writers struggled to explain, in human language, the mysterious incarnation and atoning death of the Son of God. Often we weep under the power of their inspired testimony. We get glimpses that boggle our minds, but still, we are only scratching the surface of a subject which will continue unfolding for all eternity.

Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:5-8. These sublime words describe the condescension of Jesus from the throne to the manger and then to the cross.

From the Highest to the Lowest!

There is not an illustration in all the vast reaches of time or space that could properly portray what Jesus did. Sometimes we try to fabricate imaginary

circumstances to convey the idea of His sacrifice. A diseased pack of wild dogs is described, covered with many scabs and running sores. It is postulated that if one human being would only submit to become one of the dogs, the entire pack could be saved from imminent death. Could anyone be found who would voluntarily lay aside his human condition, and suffer the unspeakable indignity of turning into a dog? Dramatic as it may sound, that is a feeble illustration of the humiliation of the divine Son of God. We cannot grasp the glory and position from which He separated when He emptied Himself and came into the condemned, dying family of Adam.

This is why it is so difficult for Christians to grasp the atonement. Why do so many treat casually the events of the cross? Surely because they do not understand what their salvation cost the Son of God. It is only when we know the cost of something that we begin to appreciate it. We value most highly that which requires the greatest investment.

All of us have encountered people who display a mystifying indifference toward the sacrifice of Christ. At the end of one of my crusades I visited a businessman who had attended every night but who had made no commitment. We had developed a warm friendship during the four-week series, so I felt bold to ask him why he had made no decision for Christ. His vague answer indicated to me that he had no understanding of the seriousness of accepting the gift of salvation. He had never made any kind of response to the gospel and, under my gentle questioning, confessed that he had no assurance of being saved. Finally, I asked him point blank, "Do you mean, Sam, that if you died tonight you would have no hope of eternal life?" He answered, "No, I have never made any kind of profession of Christianity."

Shocked by his obvious unconcern I gathered the courage to ask this question: "Sam, suppose that you could pick up $10,000 tomorrow morning from your banker in exchange for a paper containing the signatures of ten men in this city. Would you be willing to drive around the city tonight and get those signatures?" He answered, "Of course I would."

Would you run any risk of losing one of those signatures on the paper?" I asked. "Absolutely not," Sam replied, "I know a good thing when I see it."

The truth was that Sam did not recognize a good thing when he saw it, and I felt constrained to tell him so in the kindest way that my outraged spirit could manage. I said, "Sam, you would not take the least chance of losing $10,000 between now and tomorrow morning; yet you have stated that you do risk losing eternal life if you die tonight. You place more value on the money than you do on eternal life. Your appraisals are wrong. You don't have the faintest idea what it cost to provide for your salvation, or you wouldn't value it so lightly."

It was easy to see why my friend was so noncommittal toward the cross of Christ. Even though he had been around Christians all his life and had heard hundreds of sermons, he held the typical "martyr" view of the death of Jesus. It is simply not true that He died just like all the thousands of others who were crucified on crosses around the wall of Jerusalem. There can be no comparison. Christ did not die because of the nails, spear, or physical abuse. No amount of blows or pain could have produced the agonies of the cross. Others were enduring the same torture of the flesh, but none died from the same causes which took the life of the Son of God. His death was different. How was it different?

What kind of death did He suffer? The Bible says that "he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Hebrews 2:9. Think of that for a moment. He died my death, and yours, and every other person's. How could that be? Will we not have to suffer our own death-experience at the end of our days? Yes, we will. And therein lies the mystery and the wonder of what He did for us. He did not take our place in passing through the first death. He experienced the second death for every soul who has ever been born.

Christ Died the Second Death

It is so important that we distinguish between the first and second deaths. Only then will we be able to understand why God the Father turned away from His Son on the cross. Angels were not permitted to minister to Him. Jesus had to be treated as though He were guilty of every terrible sin which has ever been committed. Under the weight of that condemnation and guilt, He sweat great drops of blood and fell fainting to the ground in the Garden. On Golgotha's Hill, shut off from the approving presence of His Father, He cried in torment, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46.

Do you begin to see what Sam overlooked? He did not sense the real suffering of the cross and, therefore, had no true understanding of the cost of salvation. We shall attempt to expose some of those "hidden costs" which Sam did not recognize and which many today do not properly appraise.

Paul wrote, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12. Several fundamental questions are raised by these words of Paul. If only one man sinned, why did all have to die? Do people have to pay the penalty for other men's sins? When Adam was in the Garden of Eden, he represented every person who would ever be born. As the head of the race he stood before God as though he were every man. You and I were there,

represented by the genes and chromosomes which later produced the hereditary pattern of Adam's children. As partakers of his body and mind, all his descendants had to be affected by what affected him. He is our father, and there are laws of heredity which reproduce the genetic pattern from age to age.

What happened to Adam which also affected his children? God placed him on probation in that original paradise. The test was simple and direct: obey and live, disobey and die. We remember so well the story of the tree in the midst of the Garden. God said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Genesis 2:17. His continued existence in the perfect atmosphere of Eden depended upon obedience. Adam's happy future was conditional upon staying away from the forbidden tree, but he did not meet the condition.

No provision had been made to remove the penalty or to lighten it. The issue was clear-cut: obey and live, disobey and die. At the age of 930 the sentence was fully carried out, and Adam died and was buried.

All of Adam's children were born after his nature had become depraved through sin. They could inherit only what their father had to give, so they were born with a sinful, fallen nature. Please note that they did not inherit the guilt of their father, but only his weakened, sin-loving nature. There is no such thing as original sin, in the sense that Adam's descendants were accountable for his sin. It is true that they also were subject to death just like Adam, but their death was not the punishment for Adam's sin. They died because they had received a mortal nature through the laws of heredity. Their death resulted from the degenerated constitution which Adam transmitted to his offspring. Only Adam's death was the punishment for his sin.

From the moment sin became a fixed fact, every human being who would live became subject to the first death. In fact, if God had not intervened, it would have been an eternal death. Adam's probation ended when he sinned. As far as that first offer of life was concerned, it was finished. He had forfeited all hope of life under the proposal God had made. Now only death awaited him-a hopeless, final death. And if God had done nothing more, that's the way it would have ended-for Adam and all of his descendants.

A Second Probation Provided

But immediately after Adam sinned and before the sentence was fully executed, God introduced the plan of salvation through the seed of the woman and gave Adam a new trial (Genesis 3:15). This second probation

was conditioned upon acceptance of a Saviour who would bear man's penalty through His own substitutionary death. A new hope was set before Adam and all his posterity through this second arrangement, but it did not alter the consequences of failing the first probation.

That brings us to a very crucial question. How could God uphold His integrity by carrying out the penalty of the first failure, and still hold out the offer of a new life to everyone through another probation? God met that puzzling dilemma in such a simple way that we are amazed. He would let men live their limited life span and then die, regardless of whether they did good or evil. That first death would take care of the Adamic consequences of failing the first test. Then, let all men be raised from that first death, into which they fell through no fault of their own, and let them stand before God to answer for their own personal sins, for which they are responsible. Then their destiny would be determined on the basis of the second probation (between birth and the first death), and how they met the conditions of salvation through Christ.

If they are found guilty of personally failing the second test they will suffer the same penalty that Adam faced-death. In this case, however, there will be no further probation extended, and their death will be the second death-final, eternal extinction.

Now we can better understand the words of Paul, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Corinthians 15:22. The plan of salvation involves a resurrection of all men from the first death, so that they can be placed beyond the effects of Adam's sin. This is necessary so that they can be judged on the basis of their personal actions and choices. Adam died because he ate the fruit of the forbidden tree, not because of anything he did after that. But if, after the judgment, Adam is found worthy of the second death, it will not be because he ate the fruit, but because of other sins committed after that experience which were not confessed and forgiven.

Some may charge God with being arbitrary and cruel to bring the wicked back to life again only to destroy them in the lake of fire. Why not just let them remain under the power of the first death? That would not meet the conditions required by the second probation. The first death is not the punishment for sin for any of Adam's posterity. Justice requires that each individual be held accountable only for meeting the conditions of his own salvation. Without a resurrection no such judgment could be made, and no just retribution could be given. It is no wanton act on God's part, but a fulfillment of the standards of divine justice.

The Second Adam Meets the Test

With that understanding of the first and second deaths we are prepared to examine the roles of the first and second Adams. Just as the entire human race was represented by Adam in the Garden of Eden, so every man would be represented by Jesus, the second Adam. "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Romans 5:18, 19.

As we have seen, whatever happened to the first Adam affected all those whom he represented. Now we are told by Paul that the experience of the second Adam will directly affect all men. Jesus, the Creator, was incorporated into humanity, and stood before God as though He were every man. This is why Paul wrote, "I am crucified with Christ." Galatians 2:20. "We are buried with him by baptism." Romans 6:4. "As Christ was raised up, ... even so we also should walk in newness of life." Romans 6:4. The life of man is deeply associated with the events of Christ's life.

Because Jesus came to redeem the failure of the first Adam, He had to do it in the same flesh that mankind possessed when He was born. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." He- brews 2:17. Had He possessed any supernatural advantage over His brethren in conquering sin Jesus would have given support to Satan's charge of injustice. God had been accused of requiring an obedience that was unreasonable and even impossible. Christ came to disprove the devil's false accusation by meeting the requirements of God in the same human nature that any man may obtain through faith in the Father.

It was that perfect victory of Christ over sin and death which provides the basis of all salvation. All the descendants of Adam lay under the influence of his weakness and failure, making it impossible for any of them to obey the law. In that dying, condemned family of Adam they were doomed to perpetual struggle and defeat. But the victory of the second Adam opened a door of escape for the family of the first Adam.

Changing Families

The first Adam passed on the results of his sinful experience through physical birth-weakness, sin, and death. The second Adam passed on the results of His sinless experience through spiritual birth-partaking of the divine nature, victory, and eternal life. All the effects of the first Adam's failure are completely counteracted by the second Adam. Please don't miss the point that one can join the new family only through a spiritual birth.

Through faith in Christ a new creation takes place, lifting man out of the hopeless, carnal state of the family of Adam. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17.

The change of families constitutes one of the least understood blessings of the Christian experience. It is not a theoretical or mystical transaction with no practical results. Just as the transformation of nature is dramatically real, so the privileges of the new family are also real. One of the hardest things for the newborn Christian to accept is the total change of position, authority, and ownership under the new family arrangement. They are now eligible for all the riches and advantages of the children of God.

Incredible promises are included in this new spiritual relationship. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Romans 8:16, 17. It is easy to understand why the human mind boggles at this concept. We tend to probe for hidden reservations and secret meanings in verses like these. A joint-heir is one who holds equal rights to all the family estate. We ask ourselves how it is possible to become sudden heirs of such unlimited wealth. From abject poverty we now hold title to the universe! The holdings of God include galaxies and island universes in space. By faith we try to grasp hold of the reality: Jesus and I share and share alike in all the spiritual riches of the Father. Whatever He gets, we also receive. Paul describes the boundless resources of the Spirit-filled life in these words: "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Ephesians 3:19. Who can comprehend such language? The great, loving God who made us, and who gave up His only Son to die for us, now wants us to have everything His Son has, and also everything that He has!

Along with the staggering assets of a King, we also actually inherit the family name and the family resemblance. We even begin to look like our new Father and Elder Brother. "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Colossians 3:10. In the beginning Adam was made in the image of God, and was called a "son of God." In Genesis we read, "In the likeness of God made he him. ... And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years and begat a son in his own likeness." Genesis 5:1-3.

Like father, like son. Adam looked like God, but the resemblance was lost through sin. So Adam's son did not look like God; he looked like Adam. But under the new birth, man begins to lose his Adamic features and to look like the One who created him-Jesus. Is this resemblance real or imagined? Does God create only an illusion to make it seem that man is being restored to the divine image, or does He powerfully provide for the change to take place? There is a theological debate as to whether God's righteousness is

only accounted to man or whether it is truly imparted as well. Those who feel that man is only accounted righteous, do not believe that he can really overcome sin and live a holy life, even in Christ. But Paul's words are clear, "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Romans 5:19.

Along with the family likeness this new spiritual birth brings deliverance from the sec- ond death, which was inevitable under the Adamic nature. Christ did not change the first death penalty for Adam's failure under the first probation, but He did abolish the second death for all those who received Him under the second probation. This was made possible only because He submitted to suffer the horrible penalty of the second death in place of man. He became sin for us, and voluntarily accepted the punishment which sin demands. On the cross, with no ray of hope from the Father, Jesus was enveloped in the darkness of a billion lost souls. He tasted death for every man. Hebrews 2:9.

Abraham's Fiery Crucible

Was it easy for Jesus to have such an experience? Was it easy for the Father to withdraw from His beloved Son and treat Him as though He was guilty of the most atrocious blasphemy and crime? Only one man in the world has come near to understanding the intense suffering of the Father and the Son in that situation. That man, Abraham, gave up his only son also, and became the first human to share the agony of the cross.

Paul wrote that "the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham." Galatians 3:8. Jesus also recognized that Abraham had special revelations on the atonement. He said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." John 8:56.

To understand how this Old Testament patriarch had such prophetic insight into the work of the Messiah, we must go back to his experience on Mount Moriah. Because he had initially failed to believe that God could give him a son from Sarah's dead womb, Abraham was subjected to another test concerning life from the dead. God told him to slay his only son Isaac on an altar. The account of that lonely journey to Mount Moriah is one of the most moving stories in the sacred Word.

Abraham had no doubt about the validity of the order. He was a friend of God and had learned to recognize His voice. There was no way for Abraham to comprehend the reason for this bizarre command. The promise had been confirmed repeatedly that Isaac was the seed through whom the Messiah would come. Now he was asked to take the life of that child of his old age

through whom the world would be blessed and redeemed. How could the Saviour come through Isaac if he was slain on the altar?

By the time father and son reached the base of the mountain Abraham's faith had resolutely claimed God's resurrection power. He said to the servants, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." Genesis 22:5. This time there was no weak faltering over the seeming impossibility of the promise. No resurrection from the dead had ever occurred, but Abraham believed that God would fulfill His promise concerning Isaac's seed.

As Abraham lifted the knife over his submissive son, he was meeting the most severe test ever faced by a human being. It would have been terrible enough to take his son's life, but with one stroke of the knife he was about to destroy the only hope of salvation for himself and every person who would be born. No one except Jesus would ever hold the destiny of a world in his hand as Abraham did in that moment. It was more than the test of fatherly affection. By killing Isaac, Abraham was depriving the world of a Saviour. The knife was at his own throat also. God's unfailing word had assured him that no Messiah could be born without Isaac. Do you begin to see into the fiery crucible of Abraham's test? No wonder Jesus spoke of Abraham being able to see His day.

Even though his hand was stayed and God provided another sacrifice, Abraham really did give up his son that day. He experienced all the pain, heartbreak, and horror that attends the death of an only child. Holding the power to save His son's life, he would not exercise it. God intervened only after it was fully apparent that Abraham would not hesitate to offer up Isaac. Thank God for the faith of Abraham and for the equal faith and submission of his beloved son. No one can miss the impact of that very moving, human story. It brings the love and sacrifice of the atonement within the understanding of every child of Adam. Now we can grasp a little better how the Father and His only begotten Son suffered at the cross. The cost of our redemption becomes clearer.

How the Cross Provides Forgiveness

But now we must consider another aspect of this heavenly drama which will fur- ther illuminate God's love and sacrifice. How does the death of one man, the second Adam, provide forgiveness for all who have sinned? The Bible says, "Without shedding of blood is no remission (of sins)." Hebrews 9:22. Remission, of course, means forgiveness. The question is, How does Christ's death make it possible for Him to forgive sin? This brings us to the crux of all we have learned so far. It was necessary for Jesus to suffer the

second death in order to acquire the power to forgive.

The germ of all forgiveness is rooted in an act of substitution. Whoever forgives another person must actually substitute himself for the one he forgives, and be willing to suffer the consequences of the wrong done. For example, if I forgive someone a debt, I must be prepared to suffer the loss of the amount. If I forgive a blow, I must be willing to suffer the pain of it, without requiring the one who gave it to be punished.

Justice requires that every offender be recompensed in proportion to what he did: an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. The one who gives a blow must also suffer an equal blow in return. Forgiveness, though, relieves the offender from receiving what he legally deserves. The forgiver accepts the consequence himself in order that the guilty one can go free without punishment. Thus there is clearly a substitution of the innocent for the guilty in every act of forgiveness.

As a further demonstration let us imagine that a murdered man could forgive his murderer from beyond the grave. He would, in effect, be consenting to his own death in order that the killer would not be punished. By accepting the results of the offense against him, he allows his own death to satisfy the penalty which could be legally laid upon the murderer.

This illustration brings us very close to the heart of the atonement. We are dealing here with the readjustment of a jarred relationship. That is what atonement really is. Two parties are always involved, the wronged and the wrongdoer. In this case it is God, the wronged, and man, the one who sins against Him. Justice demands an adequate expiation of the sin. Only two courses are possible: either justice will exact the prescribed penalty, or there must be forgiveness from the offended one. If forgiveness is extended, the forgiver will have to accept the consequences of the sin, and suffer it in place of the guilty. The penalty for sin is death. So in order to grant forgiveness to the sinner, Jesus must be willing to bear in His own body the same punishment that the broken law would demand of the sinner.

The punishment for sin is not the first death, but the second death. That is why the protracted agony of Jesus on the cross was totally unlike any other death. Thousands of criminals were crucified in the same physical way that Christ was nailed to the cross, but they suffered only the bodily pain of the first death. He experienced the awful condemnation and separation from God that the vilest of sinners will feel in the lake of fire. His sensitive nature was traumatized by sharing vicariously the guilt of foul rapes, murders, and atrocities. He became sin in order to allow the full wrath of the law to fall upon Him in exactly the same way it would fall upon the lost.

In no other way can we explain the mysterious anguish of spirit which

surrounded our Saviour in His closing hours of life. From the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus bore the accumulated sins of mankind on His breaking heart. Not one ray of light was permitted to penetrate the blanket of total alienation from His Father in heaven. In order to take the place of guilty sinners and to provide forgiveness there could be no difference in their penalty and His penalty.

Let no one suggest that the Father did not suffer equally with His Son. The divine forbearance of God in allowing wicked men to torture His Son to death is the ultimate proof that He loves us with the same love that He loved Jesus. The choice He faced was very simple. He could spare the Son or He could spare us. There was no other choice. The law had been broken-the law which was holy and perfect. As a reflection of His character it could not be changed or destroyed. The penalty had to be paid. The Father loved those who had broken His law, but He also loved His Son.

Look again at the scene around that cross. God looked upon those wicked men as they spat upon Jesus and hit Him in the face with their fists. They were unworthy to touch the hem of His garment, but they were mauling Him to death. He held the power in His hand to smite those little men into oblivion. He could save His Son from cruel taunts and blows, but if He intervened not one human being would ever live again. Adam, Abraham Joseph, Daniel, and every other child of Adam would be lost for eternity. Their resurrection depended wholly upon the death and resurrection of His Beloved Son. In His omniscience God must have remembered every individual face and name, even of those who had not yet been born.

In that moment God thought about you and me. Even though He saw all our miserable failures He still wanted us to be with Him for eternity. He knew the great majority would not accept the offer of eternal life with Him, even though it would be provided at such a fearful cost. But He also knew that a few would love Him and gladly receive the substitutionary death of His Son in their behalf. So God turned away from His Son, and allowed Him to be crushed to death under the weight of sins He did not commit. Even the sun hid its face from the terrible scene, and the earth shuddered in protest. "It is finished," Jesus cried, and yielded up His life. John 19:30.

Was the Price Too High?

The price of redemption had been paid. Was it too high? For multiplied millions it was an empty investment, a wasted sacrifice. They would lightly esteem the entire transaction and reject it out of hand. But what about you? Now that you see a little clearer what it cost, do you find yourself responding to the investment He made in your salvation?

So far we have focused upon the enormous scope of the atonement - how it provided for every man, woman, and child who has ever lived. This emphasis should not obscure the terribly personal aspect of what He did. The quality of that love which brought Jesus to His death on the cross was such that He would have made the same sacrifice for even one soul. I need to remind myself every day that God not only "so loved the world," but He so loved me, that He gave His Son. The genius of the entire plan of salvation revolved around the application of His death to individuals.

Christ's love for people is repeatedly dramatized in the Bible. We see it in His time-consuming, one-person interviews. Some of His most significant spiritual discourses were delivered to single individuals. We see it also in the dangerous voyage He made across the sea to deliver the Gadarene demoniac. It occupied fully two days of His precious time to cross that stormy water and return. Only one man was directly contacted during that unpleasant excursion, but that man, later, turned the whole countryside toward the Saviour.

We must watch Jesus relate to Nicodemus, the leper, the harlot, and the despised tax-assessor before we can understand the value of a single soul. He took time with people regardless of their position or possessions. The woman of Samaria was just another shameless community "character" when Christ took the opportunity to engage her in a conversation that turned her life upside down.

Undoubtedly Jesus looked at each person as a candidate for eternal life. How else can we explain His association with Simon, Zacchaeus, and Mary Magdalene? He saw in every soul the glorious potential of reflecting His own holy character for both time and eternity. He saw there the reason for His incarnation. Each soul was the one He had come to redeem. Those were the faces which came into His mind as He hung on the cross, strengthening Him to drain the cup of His suffering.

One of the most astounding statements in the Bible about the atonement is found in He- brews 12:2, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

How could that terrible experience on the cross have any joy connected with it? We are assured that some joyful motive girded Him for the shame and humiliation of the crucifixion. What was "the joy that was set before

him"? Here lies the secret of His self-abnegation. He did it in the strength of the anticipated joy of opening wide the gates of Paradise to welcome us into His never-ending kingdom. It was love for us, and the desire to be with us for eternity which led Him to endure the unendurable. Here is a positive assurance that He was thinking of you and me as He bore the wrenching cruelties of the cross.

Is one soul worth such an infinite price? In the light of eternity the answer is Yes. Consider the amazing fact that one redeemed soul will outlive all the combined years of earth's total population. Eventually, in eternity, the life of that one person will outstrip by a million times all the life spans of all the inhabitants of this world put together. In this sense, one saved person represents more life, more accomplishment, and greater fulfillment than all the lost people combined. Jesus must have recognized that truth every time He looked into the face of a man, woman, or child. In even the most degraded human being He saw a life that could memorialize His love for longer than time had been computed.

With these glimpses into the real costs of Calvary, how could anyone lightly esteem His mission to planet earth? You can be that soul who will bear an everlasting witness to the love and grace of our Saviour. Never has so much been provided for so little. By a single step of faith we may exchange the deadly birthrights of the first Adam for the unsearchable riches of the second Adam. In a moment of surrender and acceptance we begin to share the life He deserved, because He was willing to bear the guilt, condemnation, and death we deserved. What an exchange! It will be the exhaustless theme of our study for all eternity. And as ages roll by, we will continue to get new, thrilling insights into the nature of His atoning love and sacrifice. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Hebrews 2:3. So great? So very great! There is no answer to the question because there is no escape. Accept that salvation now that costs so much to provide. Don't neglect it another moment.